

Because I Could Not Stop for Death
Emily Dickenson

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school, where children strove
At recess, in the ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us;
The dews grew quivering and chill,
For only gossamer my gown,
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Because I Could Not Stop for Death Questions:

- 1) How does Emily Dickenson portray death?
- 2) What seems to be the narrator's attitude about death?
- 3) What does the house that the narrator and death paused at represent? Think about the phrases "A swelling of the ground;" and "The cornice but a mound." What image does these phrases bring to mind?
- 4) What do you think Emily Dickenson meant in the closing two lines of the poem when she said that "the horses' heads were toward eternity"?
- 5) What is the topic of this poem? What do you think the theme of this poem is?

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night
Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is
right,
Because their words had forked no lightning
they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green
bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding
sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I
pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night Questions:

- 1) In the poem, what does “that good night” and “the dying of the light” stand for?
- 2) What message is Dylan Thomas trying to give the reader by telling them not to “go gentle into that good night” and to “rage, rage against the dying of the light”?
- 3) What did the poet mean by the line “Old age should burn and rave at close of day;”? Think about how “close of day” is a synonym of night as in “that good night”. How could a person burn and rave?
- 4) Why might “good men” cry about “how bright their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,”? What emotion does this phrase bring to mind?
- 5) What is the topic of this poem? What do you think the theme of this poem is?

Comparing and Contrasting Questions:

- 1) How do these poems differ in the way they deal with the topic?
- 2) What differing messages do the two poets give in their poems?
- 3) What similar idea do these two poems share about death?
- 4) Which poem has a similar theme to that of the short story “The Last Leaf”? In what way are the themes similar?
- 5) Of the two poems, which theme do you most agree with? Why do you agree with that theme over the other one?